

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 280

Introduced by Assembly Member Coto

February 9, 2007

An act to add Article 6 (commencing with Section 51460) to Chapter 3 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, relating to instructional programs.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 280, as introduced, Coto. Instructional programs: State Seal of Biliteracy.

Existing law sets forth various requirements for the issuance of diplomas conferred upon a pupil as evidence of graduation from high school. Existing law establishes the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma for the purpose of recognizing pupils who have mastered the high school curriculum.

This bill would establish the State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who have mastered speaking, reading, and writing skills in one or more languages, in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy would be awarded by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The State Department of Education would be required to prepare and deliver to school districts the seal insignia. Participating school districts would be required to maintain records in order to identify pupils who have earned a State Seal of Biliteracy and to affix an appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of pupils who earn a State Seal of Biliteracy.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) The study of foreign languages in elementary and secondary schools should be encouraged because foreign language study contributes to a pupil's cognitive development and our national economy and security.

(2) Multiple languages are a critical element in enabling California to participate effectively in a global political, social, and economic context, and in expanding trade with other countries.

(3) The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one language is increasing both in California and throughout the world.

(4) The California Master Plan for Education calls for pupils to graduate literate in two or more languages.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature to promote the development of literacy in one or more languages and to provide recognition of the attainment of such needed and important skills through the establishment of a State Seal of Biliteracy on the high school diplomas or transcripts of pupils attaining proficiency in one or more languages, in addition to English.

SEC. 2. Article 6 (commencing with Section 51460) is added to Chapter 3 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 6. State Seal of Biliteracy

51460. (a) The State Seal of Biliteracy is hereby established to recognize high school graduates who have attained functional proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing skills in one or more languages, in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy shall be awarded by the Superintendent. School district participation in this program is voluntary.

(b) The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

(1) To encourage pupils to develop biliteracy skills.

(2) To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills.

(3) To revitalize and promote foreign language instruction in public schools.

(4) To encourage the development of dual language immersion programs and foreign, native, and heritage language programs in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, schools.

(5) To recognize and honor California's rich and diverse language assets.

51461. A pupil who completes the requirements for a high school diploma and who meets all of the following requirements shall qualify for a State Seal of Biliteracy:

(a) If the primary language of a pupil in any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, is English, he or she shall do either of the following:

(1) Successfully complete four years of instruction in a foreign language.

(2) Pass an Advanced Placement (AP) test in a foreign language.

(b) If the primary language of a pupil in any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, is other than English, he or she shall do either of the following:

(1) Attain the proficient level on the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts.

(2) Attain the advanced proficiency level on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). For purposes of this paragraph, a participating school district may administer an additional CELDT as necessary.

(3) Pass an AP test in the pupil's heritage language.

(c) For languages in which an AP test is not available, the Superintendent shall provide a listing of equivalent summative tests that school districts may use.

51462. Under the policy direction of the Superintendent, the department shall do both of the following:

(a) Prepare and deliver to participating school districts an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of the pupil indicating that the pupil has been awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy by the Superintendent.

(b) Provide other information necessary for school districts to successfully participate in the program.

51463. A school district that participates in the program shall do both of the following:

(a) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned a State Seal of Biliteracy.

(b) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each pupil who earns a State Seal of Biliteracy.

- 1 51464. It is the intent of the Legislature that no fee be charged
- 2 to a pupil pursuant to this article.

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